

# **INDOT Long-Range Plan Development Coordination Meeting Notes**

**Meeting with the Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission**

**Conducted at the Vincennes District Offices, May 12, 2006**

**11:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon**

**In Attendance:**      *Sam Sarvis, Vincennes District Director*  
                              *John Curry, Vincennes District Planning Director*  
                              *Khalil Dughaish, Vincennes District*  
                              *Calvin Evans, Vincennes District Local Assistance*  
                              *Pam Drach, Vincennes District Program & Budget Manager*  
                              *John Myers, Vincennes District*  
                              *Lisa R. Gehlhausen, Director of Technical Services – Indiana 15 RPO*  
                              *Steve Smith, Manager – INDOT Long-Range Planning Section*  
                              *Jay Mitchell, Planner – INDOT Long-Range Planning Section*  
                              *Emmanuel Nsonwu, INDOT Urban & Corridor Planning*

The meeting began with introductions. The Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission consists of the counties of Pike, Dubois, Orange, Spencer Perry and Crawford. Steve Smith then explained the purpose of the meeting: to review the projects listed in the draft Major Moves 2006 to 2015 program, to review the preliminary scores for the 2016 IPOC candidate projects and; to review the Indiana Statewide Mobility Corridor system.

Perry County: Ms. Gehlhausen explained that there is a proposal to relocate the Tell City Ohio River Port to the west of its current location. Moving the port may have an impact on the highway system and a request for improved connectivity on SR 66 to the proposed new port site may be forthcoming in the future. As it is now, the port is seeing an increase in tonnage as South African pig iron is being delivered to the port to for break drum production; an increase in the tonnage of steel destined for the Toyota manufacturing plant in Gibson County is also anticipated.

More pressing is a need to upgrade rail and rail bridges for the Hoosier Southern Railroad to accommodate increased traffic and weight loads from the Tell City Port to the Norfolk & Southern rail line. Ms Gehlhausen explained that Indiana 15 and the Port Authority were actively seeking financial resources to assist with the estimated 8 million dollar price tag for the rail upgrade. The Planning staff asked if the INDOT Rail Section had been contacted. Ms Gehlhausen replied that the INDOT Rail Section was able to provide a \$200,000 grant but that it was fall short of the total estimated cost for the upgrade.

Ms Gehlhausen explained that there is a business plan in place to also use one section of short line rail from Jasper to French Lick for passenger service to transport persons from the train station in Jasper to the new casino in French Lick. This section of rail would be performing double duty, passenger and freight. An application for Transportation Enhancement funds had been submitted to INDOT this year for funds to assist with the proposed passenger service. The

final status of that application is not yet known as INDOT has not yet released this year's awards.

A discussion followed concerning transportation links to the new Interstate 69. Ms. Gehlhausen was asked her opinion as to which east west highway links would carry the greatest traffic to I-69. Ms. Gehlhausen said that she thought that from Jasper, SR 56 would be the more important link to I-69. When the Dubois County US 231 upgrade is complete, she thought that products related to the automotive industry would use US 231 and I-64 to link up with the Toyota manufacturing facility in Gibson County.

Another important State Highways link in the Indiana 15 Region was identified as the SR 56 connection between French Lick SR 145 and Jasper. Ms. Gehlhausen explained that most persons traveling to French Lick from Jasper currently use that Highway. She felt that traffic would increase with the opening of the new casino in the French Lick area.

The US 150/SR 56 link between West Baden Springs (SR 145/SR56) and Paoli (SR 37) will become even more important after the casino in French Lick opens. Ms. Gehlhausen said that she would like to see the US 150/SR 56 improvement (reconstruction) project move forward as planned along this corridor. This is an important project for the region and it can't wait until 2016.

There is a bridge being constructed over the White River to the northwest of Haysville. Ms. Gehlhausen wanted to clarify whether this new bridge was the new Portersville Bridge being planned by the County or whether it was the new US 231 bridge. The District confirmed that the bridge was the new US 231 bridge.

Ms. Gehlhausen noted that the new SR 145 connector under construction in Perry and Crawford Counties will result in a vastly improved link to Tell City and the river port.

Ms. Gehlhausen said that in her opinion, some of the highest transportation priorities for the future of the region can be tied to economic development, accommodating casino traffic and business interest links to Indianapolis. She pointed out that Far Best west of Jasper was one of the top turkey processing centers in the nation, it's ranked as the 11<sup>th</sup> largest nation-wide and it is the largest in Indiana. Feed is brought in to the area by rail and then trucked from the rail facility to area producers. It was noted that Turkey feathers litter parts of SR 56 resembling a light snow fall next to the roadway in places.

In Perry County, there remains the issue on SR 166 where a slide took place several years before.

I-69 Community Planning Grants: Steve Smith provided an update regarding the status of the I-69 Community Planning Grant Program. The "notice-to-proceed" has just been issued to HNTB, the consulting firm selected to administer Phase I of the program. Phase I of the program calls for an assessment of those planning practices currently in place along the corridor, the development of corridor strategies for economic development and, the development of a tool kit for local communities along the corridor to prepare for the anticipated impact of the new interstate facility. Phase I is anticipated to take about 12 months to complete. Phase II will come

on the heels of Phase I and will provide planning grants to identified counties and cities along the corridor.